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49. 1188.

THE MYSTERY OF MARKING.

A Parable for Children.

"Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."—*Rev.* xxii. 12.

"In this way the knowledge of thyself shall be a step toward the knowledge of God; and from His Image, which is renewed in thee, He Himself shall appear."—*S. Bern. in Cant. Serm. XXXVI.*

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MDCCCXLIX.

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ALDERSGATE S

Our Mirror is a blessed book,
Where out from each illumined page
We see One Glorious Image look
All eyes to dazzle and engage,

The Son of God, and that indeed
We see Him as He is we know,
Since in the same bright glass we read
The very life of things below.

Christian Year, Fest. S. Bart.

THE

MYSTERY OF MARKING.

I WENT into my girls' school one day, and found most of the children busy marking. They had samplers before them, which they were copying. The samplers were in various colours, but all of the same pattern: still the little workwomen performed their tasks very differently one from another.

One or two were very quick and very diligent in their work: they gave their whole heart and mind to it. They copied the pattern very exactly; they finished their task in a short time; and there was not a stitch wrong in their embroidery, so correctly had they executed it. It was approved at once by their good schoolmistress, and stored away in the closet as quite perfect.

ness, and imagined that they
by it for a little waste of tin
therefore, sometimes wandered fi
sometimes they neglected to look
sometimes they neglected to loc
embroidery: sometimes they sto
with the children who sat near to
they made, here and there, a fals
observing it, or did not draw the s
or make them so straight as they sh

These children also were called
narking to their mistress. She pc
nistakes, and scolded them for the
nd they, being on the whole obedi
earted, returned readily, and wi
mend their faults, to correct their
nd to remedy all the

And their work at last was, upon the whole, correct and beautiful, though not so perfect, except in a very few instances, as that of those who had been more attentive from the first, and had not needed to make any corrections.

Other children were much more careless. They began, perhaps, with tolerable diligence; but, being light and trifling, any little matter distracted their attention. They began some of them to yawn, and gape, and let their work down in the dust: some of them turned to chatter, others to play, others to dispute with the children next to them. They made a few stitches with hypocritical faces, when they thought that their mistress was looking at them; and they pretended then to be gazing steadily at their pattern. But their eyes were seldom upon it: their work was not at all like it. When they had done any part of their marking, it was all full of mistakes. Most of it was wrong; for from not seeing when they took false stitches, they went on, when they did work, from a false one, so that all the rest were necessarily incorrect.

Then the older or more diligent girls looked warningly at them, or entreated them earnestly to be more industrious.

Or, perhaps, the mistress found fault with

. they were asked for it, or else done
ctly, that it required to be all picke
lone over again.

w when these children returned to
some of them were very sorry that
een so idle and careless. They cried
were so justly found fault with; and
were sent back to their task, they di
off crying; but in the midst of their
iet to work with twofold diligence, and
s, and zeal. They were very thankfu
er chance was given them, and h
l so much of their schooltime already
showed all the haste they could, to
the time which they had lost. They
harken any more to the whispering or r
their former idle companions, but ret
with silent sorrow and renewed dili-

But some few others, when they were blamed, and their work condemned, when they were in consequence sent back to do it all over again, were either hypocritical, or stubborn, or still inattentive, and trifling. The better children's entreaties, the elder children's expostulations, and even their mistress's rebukes, had no effect, or at least no lasting effect on them. They either pretended to begin the work again without really doing so; or else with a scowling brow, or with a bold brazen face, refused to undertake the work any more; and were ready, if they had dared, to trample pattern and all in the dust under their feet. Or else, when they sat down again, and began their marking anew, after a few stitches they turned to say a few words once more to their old associates, as if that were no great matter, or at least a very venial offence. And then they began in consequence to neglect their work as of old. They soon talked more freely and idly than before. They grew more careless than ever about their task. They became continually more stubborn and hardened against rebuke and warning. And now every stitch they took was sure to be wrong;—their whole work was one fault.

And what remained for such children?—what

nd certain passages of Holy Scriptur
ısages, I mean, where the Mark of (
ı mark of the beast, the Image of CH
ı image of the evil one are revealed
mped in men's foreheads, or written i
ıds.

. remembered the awfulness of the proc
vast importance of the result, as s
us in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel,
:teenth, fourteenth, and other chapter
ɔk of Revelations.

thought also of that solemn evening ir
a type of Christian salvation, the lin
rposts of the Israelites were all mark
blood of the Lamb, that the Destroye
s over them.

Neither could I forget the sign which

looked again on the scene before me in the school, there came up methought a kind of vision, or representation, which perhaps may be called the parable, or Mystery of Marking.

saw a large schoolroom full of c
vas larger than the largest room I ha
ınd the children were so numerous
ıot count them. Its walls glitter
:hey were very high, reaching up to
:oof was a dome of molten sapphire,
with stars. And both walls an
:overed over with strange symbols
emblematic pictures, whose meanin
understand; nor did the children l
as if they comprehended them. I
of the school, on a high kind of thr
whom I took to be the Master.
I perceived, could not see Him,

and am therefore unable to describe Him clearly; but there rushed up in my mind that description in the Apocalypse of One "like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle: His head and His hairs white like wool, and His eyes as a flame of fire: and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and His voice as the sound of many waters. He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Then as I looked more attentively round the room I perceived that it had two doors, one at each end. One door was for entering, the other for going out. Through these all the scholars had to pass.

Over each doorway hung a curtain or veil strangely like each other and yet strangely different. The curtain over the entrance-door was very beautiful. It looked like a sheet of crystal water, drops of spotless dew woven together by Almighty power into a living silver tissue, dazzling and most wonderful to behold. Sometimes the water glowed like blood, sometimes it shone like fire, and though thousands upon thousands

sea, "unto Moses," when ki
God might have had the sam

The curtain over the other
of shadow or mist, that nev
It had a pale, sad look. The
colour in it, and yet I could
and there was something
ghastly stillness. As I wa
stretched out my hand to feel
it was so icy cold, that I cou
but drew back my hand shudd

As I stood thus in the ro
fresh children were continu
others who were there conti
these never came back again.
dazzled with the quick succ
toring and departing, I tu

and this task was Marking. The marking
be done on that piece of stuff or canvas,
it brought in its hands. This was pointed
it, and its task assigned to it; and all the
als necessary to work with were bestowed
it; and a sampler was set before it, with
ttern in it, which it was to copy. There
so a basin placed beside each child, full of
me living water which hung glittering
the threshold.
not tell you the costliness of the piece of
hich each child brought with it to work
body in the school, I understood, could de-
; for its price was absolutely inestimable.
in looking at it I could not be much sur-
for indeed it was a most marvellous ma-

piece which each child carried was exactly
e and shape of the child itself. You would
aid it was the very child—yet it had not
pearance of flesh, rather it seemed like a
f crystal water, or clear air, or even some-
nuch finer than air, so rare and subtle, and
ly appeared the substance of which it was
ed.
ther singular thing about these pieces of
as, that not one of them, notwithstanding

pearance that it made me tr
too so badly for all those bea
that, methought, I should h
if I had not seen that each pie
into the room, was plunge
whom it belonged, in that c
which hung over the thresh
out of the water, I saw that
figure drawn in outline up
which seemed to cover and d
deous spot which before was

The face and person of th
ful beyond expression. It
piece of stuff, and yet, thou
piece of stuff with its outlin
alter the particular shape an
pieces, only it beautified an

it fixedly, I recognised it to be the outline of that glorious Form which presided as master over the school-room. I perceived it to be His image and likeness, cast in outline on every one of the children's samplers. I knew this at once from its surpassing and superhuman beauty; but there was also a name written underneath it, testifying that it was JESUS CHRIST.

Now as every child received back its piece of stuff with the outline of this form and name upon it, a commandment was given it, and this was the commandment, that it should mark the piece of stuff, which it brought with it, according to the pattern which should be set before it, and its task was to be accomplished in this way. It was to fill up the outline of the form and name, drawn on the piece of stuff belonging to it, accurately and exactly, according to that pattern. Abundance of materials, it was told, was ready in the school with which the work was to be done, of which some at once were put into its hand, and which afterwards were to be had in great plenty for the asking.

Then I considered, and understood in part, the meaning of the vision or representation which I beheld.

The school-room signified the Church of God

heaven.

It was very large, for it is appo
nations. Its walls were so high
Head is in heaven, yea exalted ever
heavens. They had the appearance
cause God Himself defends the C
about, and He is a "consuming fire
mises indeed to be "glory in the
wall of fire round about her."

Its roof had the semblance of s
mingled with stars, because, not the
but a portion also of the Church,
glory with the spirits of just men n

The walls and roof were all cove
terious emblems and pictures, be
Church there are ever wonderful sig
of Christ's presence, and Christ

tongues. And though they are of such different ages, and sexes, and conditions, no wonder that they all seem to me like children—for how often do the LORD and His Apostles speak to all Christians as children, and little children, yea "except we be converted and become as little children, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," and "whosoever therefore (saith the LORD) shall humble himself as this little child the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The glorious Master, invisible to the children, was plainly the LORD JESUS. For "One is your master" (He says) "even CHRIST, and all ye are brethren," and He, being gone up into heaven, and departed to the Father, is no longer to be seen present with us in the flesh. Yet we know that His sheep hear His voice, and He can reach us with His rod. For "whom I love, I rebuke and chasten"; and His hand can take hold of us, for "My sheep" (He says) "hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

The curtain or tabernacle round about Him was the heaven of heavens, into which He is now entered.

nitted into His Church, since by one
ve all baptized into one body," and s
:ept a man be born of water and the
:annot enter into the kingdom of heav
was plainly signified by the bright curt
:er hanging across the threshold, thro
:very child that entered had to pass.
:eived why the water was now like
ike fire, but ever pure and stainless,
number of children and how foul soe
through it. For baptism is with water
but inwardly with the Blood of the
the fire of the Holy Spirit, which c
from all sin, and can never be defilec
membered how there are "three tha
ness upon earth, the spirit, the wat
blood, and these three agree in one."

The pale impenetrable shadow at

which it had on the children, and their work, of which more will be said hereafter. Moreover I knew that it is death, which withdraws us all out of the visible Church when our appointed time is come.

So when I understood the meaning of these two doors, I no longer wondered at seeing so many entering in and passing out by them, since it is the law of GOD that all the Christian world should do so.

Furthermore, when I remembered how it is written, "work out your own salvation in fear and trembling," and that the "end of our faith" is "the salvation of our souls," I perceived that the piece of stuff or canvas, which each child brought with it to work on, was its own soul. Well then might it be called costly and precious, since the SAVIOUR asks, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and since He Himself purchased it for Himself at no less a price than His own Blood. Neither did I thenceforth marvel much at the rarity and wonderfulness of its mysterious substance; since I knew that the soul is from the breath of GOD, and formed in His image and likeness, and made capable of eternal happiness or misery. I knew also what that dark spot in each piece of stuff

ı so alarmed when I saw it, as it was a
·ond all hope of relief, if it had not
ɒ to take it away by laying it upon Hi
ɴ.

ɔo I comprehended, likewise, that it
ıly the image and likeness of Jesu
s signified by the glorious form drawı
ɜ on each piece of stuff, as it passed
ɔ waters at the threshold. For thi
ɔssed on every soul in its baptism
nembered how the Apostle speaks o
ns as "buried with Christ by bapt
ath, that, like as Christ was raised
ad by the glory of the Father, eve
ıo should walk in newness of life;"
ɜ declares (as I have before noticed)
ɔ have borne the image of the earthy,

baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST," put Him on as a garment, and mark, and covering; put Him on so as to be clothed with Him.

Therefore I understood why this form, thus drawn on each piece of stuff, was so inexpressibly bright and lovely; since it was the heavenly form of JESUS Himself, "fairer than the children of men:" and why in every case it was the same image and likeness which appeared, since there is "one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism;" since "by one SPIRIT we are all baptized into one body;" and since in JESUS CHRIST there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but CHRIST all in all; while at the same time each piece of stuff preserved its own measure and character under the picture: since the soul is not destroyed, but only repaired and reformed, sanctified and glorified, invested or arrayed with righteousness by the impression of the SAVIOUR upon it. I understood also why this impression concealed, and effaced for the time, that dark hideous taint or spot; as the guilt of original sin is remitted and cleansed by the atoning Blood of JESUS in baptism, so that baptized infants dying before commission of actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.

But when I remembered that, if we outlive the

ıod Almighty. For I remembered
rritten, "Work out your own salvati
nd trembling," through "God Who v
ou both to will and do of His good
\nd this work was well signified in t
ince it is the filling up of the form
nd likeness of Jesus, traced at first
ouls by God's finger in our baptism
:onsidered how it is written, "Hold
hou hast, that no man take thy crov
' To him that hath shall be given, an
ıave more abundance; but from him
ıot, shall be taken away even that
ıath;" and, "My little children, of
ravail in pain till Christ be formed
ınd, "For whom He did foreknow, H
predestinate, to be conformed to the

make a pillar in the temple of My God; and he shall go out no more, and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new Name." "And they shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads."

When I had compared what I saw with these passages of Scripture, that I might better understand the vision, before I began to watch the children and their work, I turned to look over the schoolroom once more, to see any objects which I might have omitted, and to consider their meaning and interpretation.

Then I perceived that every child had its work appointed it, as it is written, "To every man his work." But I observed also that the children were divided into classes, and that one or more ushers or monitors were set over each class, whose business it was to supply every child with the materials necessary for its work, and to superintend the execution of it. And I heard that the Master had charged all these elder children to set a good example in their own persons, and never to grudge or be sparing in their supplies to any child; but as, being His stewards,

mastered, or even suffer the least
fact the more they were requir
ever abounded.

I had noticed too that by
set a vessel or basin full of the
which sparkled over the thresh
shone, you remember, someti
sometimes like fire. In this t
their needles continually, and
thread which they used; and
were to cleanse away any dust, o
should gather upon their work at
vessel signified that faith, where
dren continually sprinkle all th
say and think, and every offeri
make to God, and any good w
accomplish, with the atoning Bl
They know that

that spiritual flame of love they consume, any sin and fault of daily occurrence which may gather upon their souls day by day.

There was only one other object that I noticed particularly, this was the old school clock in the middle of the room. Its works and wheels were all hidden. Its face only was to be seen. This had a strange mysterious appearance, seeming as if it were alive, and kept watch upon the children. Its great hands went regularly on, but made no noise whatsoever. There was another lesser hand which had its own proper circle to go round. This was fixed for every child who entered into the school. But no child knew, except perhaps a few moments before the time, when the hand would reach the end of the circle. The moment it did so the clock used to strike, and I observed that there was always some sign from the Great Master before it did so, as if He were giving it commandment to bring the child's schooltime to a close. For when the clock struck, the child's season of preparation was ended. It was not allowed to stay in school a moment longer, or give another stitch to its work. The schooltime ended as soon as the clock struck, and the sound of its striking was like bells tolling. This great clock methought

time—its time of trial in this world.
us know how long this will be. It is
we know, only by God Himself. "
our years to an end even as a tale th
and then, ready or unprepared, in
state our work of salvation may b
undone, well finished or just begun,
and that without further delay.

Having thus considered the scho
chief objects in it, and their meanin
pretation, it remained that I shoul
attentively as I could the parable or
Marking which I saw in it.

Now I will endeavour, to the best of my power, to describe the behaviour of the children in the school, and how it fared with the pieces of work severally assigned to them. I hardly know indeed, if the description will be as plain as I could wish; for the whole process was very mysterious and surprising, and there were, I could discern, very powerful and subtle influences at work, which it was not possible for me fully to investigate; and the behaviour of the children, and the progress and changes of their work, were so very different one from the other, that I was much startled and puzzled. The whole schoolroom seemed a labyrinth or mystery, which neither my sight nor understanding could by any means master.

Nevertheless, as I kept watching very wistfully, and with many prayers for wisdom from above, the numberless scholars in the school, and the numberless varieties in their conduct and work, methought a kind of darkness rolled away from

and their work; and this, I t
spectacle before me.

Outside the schoolroom I coul
the door that there was a multi
each with its piece of stuff in its
however, I have nothing to rel
was a fearful thing to watch the
darkness, regardless altogethe
were going, and what was to be t
selves and of their work.

The children who entered into
it is with them that I am conc
with them, as I observed before,
beautiful and strange piece of stu
sad dark taint in it. This and
remember, were plunged into the
tain of water which hung across

This I had observed at the first; but now, when I was grown more expert in following the several pupils and their tasks, I perceived that some children, almost immediately after they came up out of the water with that glorious impress on their stuff, were caught away suddenly from the one door to the other.

For from the door of departure at the further end of the room, and out of the pale cold shadow which hung over it, there stretched out into the school continually two great iron hands, (as they seemed to me,) and laid hold upon some child, and drew it into the shadow. There, in the case of those who were caught thus immediately away, that beautiful outline was at once filled up. The piece of stuff indeed retained its childlike appearance, but the picture and mark were fixed upon it, as it entered that cold white shadow, so as no longer to run any risk of alteration.

It was as if the reflection of some fair child in a pure sheet of crystal water were suddenly congealed and made solid, in its tender loveliness, by an irresistible frost. And this, as I discovered more fully afterwards, was always the effect of that shadow. Light as it seemed, it fixed every figure, and colour, and mark, even to the very least, in every piece of work which was drawn

the entra
schoolroom, and the cloc
sweetly, and its sound w
breeze in the morning, as t
But these were comparative

By far the greater part
the schoolroom to become r
if they would, to carry on
tasks, under the direction
attendants. Still the period
remained in the school were
much more considerable tha
however, stayed any great le
when it was over, all thought

All these children were se
work, each in its proper place.
it the piece of stuff which I
already. As I said also

its canvas, so that the Form and Name might be completed before schooltime was over. For when schooltime was ended, (and each child's schooltime was distinct from the rest, and none of them knew when its particular time would close,) then the clock struck. Immediately those two great hands came out of that pale sad shadow at the door of exit, and laid hold on the child and its work, and drew them together into the shadow. Then the child's figure seemed to me to drop into a deep large pit like a grave, while its work passed on through the cold freezing mist, and every mark grew fixed upon it as if for eternity.

The patterns set before the children were very marvellous. They were all the same. Each appeared like a mirror or looking-glass, clear as crystal, on which the Form and Name of the invisible Master of the school, that same Form and Name traced in outline on each piece of stuff, were reflected, but not indistinctly or in outline. No, in the pattern the outline was perfectly filled up, and the Image and Likeness was so very glorious, that lovely as it was it was terrible to look upon. Its beauty was incomparable, its brightness dazzling, passing that of the sun at noon. I could not bear to contemplate it. It

child was the blessed and
of God, in which from first t
Name of Him Who is Alph
beginning and the ending, i
believer. And I remembered
"Search the Scriptures, for i
have the words of eternal life
which testify of Me;" and His
"Receive with meekness the
which is able to save your sou
to mind how we are said to see
glory of the Lord;" and I und
effulgence of the mirror was
glorious Gospel of Christ, Wh
God," shining unto His childre
the light of the knowledge of t
in the face of Jesus Christ."

carry on and complete, according to the measure of the ability given it, this Image and Likeness within the school hours, before the night came, in which none might work any more, was the appointed task and trial assigned to every disciple in that school.

Having reconsidered these things, I began to wonder how the several children would perform their tasks; so I hastened, in my vision, to move through the room, and to look over the children's shoulders as they sat at work.

As I moved thus through the room, I started and cried out; for I became aware that some one was there whom I had not before discerned.

I could not clearly distinguish his figure or features; only I could perceive that they were inconceivably horrible and hideous, and the very opposite, in every point, to those of the good and glorious Master of the school. I could make out also that he, as well as that good Master, was invisible to the children, although many of them were not unconscious of his presence. But there was such darkness and blackness in him and round him, that they could not see him. I marked also that he never rested, never stood still, but that he kept walking up and down, and to and fro, and going round and round and round.

rested; not one limb in his form, i
in his countenance, ever rested. I
to see how full he was of unrest.

Now I perceived that he was b
object, certainly, I thought, upon i
by the way in which he watche
with those fiery eyes of his, and
in which he kept creeping, and tu
cling round about them, I began t
his object was, either to steal
pieces of stuff from them, or else
destroy their work.

Then felt I better why the child
manded so to hold fast their work
haste, and use such diligence in fi
the envy, and cunning, and mali
which showed themselves in that

So I turned again, if possible, with even deeper interest, to my consideration of the children's work.

The spectacle which met me was very strange.

On some pieces of stuff the outline of that beautiful Form, and the writing under it, seemed rapidly filling up. Limb after limb and feature after feature appeared to assume the garments, and shape, and colour of the bright reflection in the mirror.

Every minute the picture in the sampler seemed to grow liker and liker to that perfect and excellent representation of the great Master of the school.

Here some little fault was continually corrected, there some little void covered over.

I cannot tell you how shining and beautiful these samplers became. It almost dazzled my eyes to look at them. And still they never ceased growing clearer and brighter. Neither did the pieces of stuff lose any of them their own proper character, although the pictures so exactly resembled one another. There was no confusion, or noise, or parade, about these children's work, although they performed it with such diligence and perseverance.

I hardly knew to what I should compare the

blossom after blossom, glittering
and shedding perfume round abo
lightly and musically in the so
each flower distinct from the re
alike. Or perhaps it was like
coming out of stars in the dark va
head; when a swift breeze swee
of mist and cloud, and the wh
sparkles out of a sudden in its sta
every bright lamp on high distir
fellows, and yet all shining with
venly radiance.

This was indeed a very gladden
Apostle's words shot across m
thought he must have spoken ir
such children, when he said, "An
face, beholding as in a glass th

other children's tasks; for I had seen long before that there were great differences in their appearance.

As I gazed over some other children's shoulders, I beheld in some instances that glorious outline disappear at once, as a meteor that starts forth in the sky, and then sinks, and is lost in an instant.

This in general seemed to happen either from the want of teachers required, or from the negligence of teachers appointed, for the several divisions and classes of the school. It was most lamentable, I thought, that there should be any such want, any such neglect. And I could not help groaning when I saw how many places in the school showed this sad deficiency.

In other cases I discerned the shining outline beginning to fill up and brighten, as in the case of the first children's work. And then there was a stop; sometimes a sudden, sometimes a gradual cessation.

But the instant that the pictures ceased to grow brighter, that very moment they began to grow dimmer and fainter. This I found was an invariable law applying to all the pieces of work in the school. They all must either keep brightening or darkening, there was no other alternative.

Some continued to grow more and more ob-

...ion had been covered ov
ter's likeness, began to enla
to grow yet blacker and foul

By and by I saw other sin
growing up out of this origin
springing up from some pro
not the likeness only, but ever
good Master's form began to
disappear.

But what was my horror, wl
out on those precious pieces of
glorious outline had been trace
picture begun, the outline of a
then that outline filling up, an
together different superseding
which the samplers received,
passed through the living wat
entrance-door!

round about the poor children in the school, as if ready to devour or crush them.

The change seemed so very sad, so very terrible, and this new form and mark so very foul and hideous, that I really thought no child in this school could ever have grown so ugly; yet, alas, there were many such.

And then I wondered above measure how these wretched children could bear to look at their handywork, and contemplate the marking, at which they were so busy, when it was so hideous and frightful.

Then I saw that there was a kind of strange wild mist floating about, which kept gathering between the children and their work, as this image grew upon it. And when I looked, as these children did, through this fog or mist, I perceived that it had the power of concealing the hideousness and terribleness of the picture, at least till it was nearly finished. Yea it had even the power of rendering that foul likeness beautiful and pleasant in its aspect, arraying it with a kind of wild and lurid glory, so that it seemed, as it were, to fascinate the children, till they were ready to fall down and worship it.

But when I looked at it in the true light of day, which shone in the school-room, I saw that

... so memorable a sight, had I
that in some instances another cha
I distinguished that, now and t
shrine, where the Good Master sa
what seemed like a rushing sweepi
scattered the fog from some of th
children's eyes.
I could see them shudder and s
deousness and foulness of their un
work. And I clapped my hands, v
that terrible likeness and image me
solving away, sometimes removing
sometimes withdrawing more slow
samplers on which the children wer
As the hideous form passed aw
my joy to behold the lovely likenes
Master re-appearing—coming up bi
tering as before, only in more tend

different from that of the first children's work, which had never been obscured and spoiled. It was not quite so distinct and glorious, and yet in some instances it was even, if possible, more lovely, as the blush on a pale cheek, when health returns after sickness, is more delicate and vivid than health's ruddiest glow.

And then, as if it shone amidst showers, round that holy and bright form thus restored, there was a many-coloured rainbow, illuminating the whole school-room with its tremulous brilliance.

And many children, who sat near, seeing it, began to weep, and sing at the same time. And their voices sounded sweet and low, like the whisperings of trees and fountains; and far away there mingled in other yet sweeter minstrelsies coming from unseen singers, as the deep warblings of nightingales, hid in the thick forest glades, blend with those murmurings of woods and waters. And as the voices of the children beneath, and the far-off music above, united and harmonised together, a flush of rose-coloured light shot out from the shrine where the Good Master was sitting. And I knew that He was smiling over these children's restoration, since nothing except one of His smiles could have beamed forth such tender love, and diffused such joy.

... and brighter, a
" changing from glory to glo
I gazed on them.

Comforted by this sight, I f
again on those pieces of work
storation, and resurrection as
ever occurred. They had becor
and they kept continually grc
blacker, till they were more ob
than night itself. Then there sp
them a foul and abominable sten
of corruption, and putrefaction
out of graves. And I said, "
children will no longer be dece
over their eyes. They will no
guish how wretched a work the
gaged in. Surely this ill-savou
must awaken them "

began to try and alter it; but it was too late. They took instruments, methought, to unpick it. They called faintly for water to wash it out; but their basins were gone, or the water was all spilled. They could effect nothing. It was too late. That hideous likeness, which was their own handywork, kept staring them in their face for all their feeble fruitless efforts. Some began then to cover themselves with the mist once more. Some wrinkled their brows in stubbornness, and tried to brazen the matter out; as if they would kill the fear which was killing them. Some seemed to bury their faces in their knees, as if not to see the picture was to obliterate it.

When I had made this rapid survey of the children and their work, and seen that in a general way they were divided into three classes, viz. those who filled up and finished the outline of glory and goodness from the beginning—those who lost it altogether, and had that hideous and foul form depicted on it instead—and those who recovered that form of the Good Master, after they had lost it, and obliterated that wicked form, after it had begun to be traced upon their samplers; to what purpose, I thought with myself, is all this marking? and what is the end of the

room, never to return to it a
this was a law of that school, that
re-enter it, and have a second time
it had once left it. There was nc
for ever. There was only one s
each child, only one opportunity of
one season of preparation for depar

Now as I looked at the cold pale
hung over that door of departure
again, as I had observed at the
great iron hands came out contin
room, and, when the clock struck, a
the Great Master on the throne,
child after child, to draw them into
shadow, and their work with them.

They tore some away in an in
they dragged away neither slowly
Some they

hands first touched it, as if they were freezing cold. And, though every child knew that its turn must soon come, yet not one seemed aware of the exact hour when it should be seized, and by far the most part seemed altogether unprepared to be thus arrested.

Nevertheless the clock never ceased striking; and the great iron hands never ceased from their work, but ever kept stretching out, and seizing, and carrying away, whether the children were ready or unprepared.

The behaviour of the children when those great hands were laid on them, was marvellously different. All, I said, when they first felt their cold icy touch, started and shuddered. This was natural and unavoidable.

But after that first movement of repugnance, I could see that some children committed themselves to the hands easily and readily, some even gladly and exultingly, though not without a solemn awe and trembling, which was very beautiful to behold. These were children in whose samplers the image and likeness of the Good Master shone very brightly and distinctly. In the midst of the Form which they had worked, His Name appeared in clear vivid characters, as if every letter was a sunbeam. They seemed to

...ing odours
were drawn along, and pure
to touch their lips lightly, ar
pered near them, sweeter, t
the sweetest music I ever l
seemed to lay themselves dow
I perceived that their eyes we
they were borne onward nearer
that cold pale shadow, I cou
was rent in twain from the to
and that these children's gaze w
and wistfully, as on some unu
prospect beyond the veil.

And methought very far aw
guish the towers of a magnific
as if built of precious jewels, wi
wide open, and within the gat
with molten gold: and at

beautiful, sporting up and down like children safe at home. And harps of gold were in their hands, and their lips were all moving in unison, as if they were chanting hymns. And sure, I thought the far echoes of their minstrelsy were the sounds which were murmuring so pleasantly in those children's ears, and comforting them and gladdening them as they came close to that cold fearful shadow, through which of necessity they were to pass.

At the summit of the city, and at the point where the streets all converged, was a dazzling temple filled with brightness unspeakable and intolerable, whence all the glory of that heavenly city and its blessed inhabitants streamed out incessantly. All that I could distinguish there, however, was the Form and Name of the Good Master of the school, which seemed the manifestation of all the inner majesty, and the centre and fountain of that surpassing splendour, and the object of imitation, adoration, and love to all that blessed family in the city.

When, therefore, I perceived, on what the eyes of those children who went so softly and joyously toward the cold pale shadow, were evermore fixed, I ceased to wonder any longer why they should so rejoice and be glad.

Some of these, however, then of
selves to finish their samplers as car
could; and committed themselves, n
without regret and alarm, yet still
tion and a comfortable hope, to the
they could not shake off.

Some groaned and wept for a whi
they found that there could be nc
yielded themselves up to the grasp
with a dull and stupid insensibility.

Some made a great pretence of pe
and confidence, and laughed and
hands as they were borne away; y
that their security often came fro
the deceitful mist, which so change
of their work, as to make evil se
dark light, and foul fair; and their
like delirium, and their eyes glazed

eth who are His." And when all these changeful features and colours are fixed for eternity in that pale mist, it will probably be easy to perceive. And indeed there was no noise and confusion at the departure-door, where that shadow of death was hanging; but perfect stillness and solemn peace, as if there were no difficulty in sorting the children's work at its conclusion, and I knew that all the doubt was the effect of my own ignorance.

There were, indeed, other children, who, when the clock struck, and the iron hands grasped them, began to yell, and to rage, and to wrestle, as if they would strike them away. But I saw that for these children there was a great sharp sting in each of those iron hands, like the sting of a venomous insect, only far larger, and more piercing, and full of the deadliest poison. As soon as the hands touched these children, those stings shot out, and ran into them, and their work with them; so that they could no longer drop or fling away their samplers, as they wished to do, or succeed in extricating themselves from the inevitable grasp.

So they were dragged on, some howling and blaspheming, some in stubborn and hideous silence, striving and struggling till they streamed

the pale cold motionless shadow,
handywork together.

These were the children on w
the dreadful and foul likeness o
being, who kept running up and
and fro, was drawn in such breadth
as scarcely to admit of even the
that they were indeed marked with
had become his children.

Thus all the children, one after
drawn on into that pale immov
which covered the door of depar
school.

Then I observed that they all s
into an open pit, like a grave, an
out of sight. Meanwhile their s
then appeared of far more impo
children's bodily frame showed c

driven snow, and softer than the softest down; while others seemed woven of great iron chains, smoking, as if just out of the furnace, dark and black as midnight, and very terrible to look upon. And then according to their respective marks they were stored away in separate storehouses, with innumerable other samplers resembling them, which had been taken away before, all marked with the same mark, that is, either with the bright or dark likeness, and image, and name.

All, however, that took place behind the veil, I beheld very dimly and indistinctly, so that I cannot venture to speak at all exactly concerning it. Only thus far, however, I could perceive and understand with certainty, that the likenesses, and images, and superscriptions, were never exchanged one for the other any more.

And I thought of the words of Solomon, "If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north; in the place the tree falleth there it shall be." And a verse which I had read came up also in my mind,

> "The grayhair'd saint may fail at last,
> The surest guide a wanderer prove;
> Death only binds us fast
> To the bright shore of love."

I considered next that I had indeed watched the

materials provided for all; the s
assigned to all. Whence, then,
differences? Let me watch the
fully, and surely the reason will l

Accordingly I went round fr
children, and stood in front of the
not only the results of their beha
their behaviour itself; not only
work on their samplers, but the
their hands too. I beheld, in sh
process of the marking; and this,
else in that school, was very surpr
vellous.

But as the children were num
shades of difference in their hand
and sometimes so finely drawn,
scarcely distinguish the causes

classes, into which upon the whole the school seemed divided.

In every school in a general way you may distinguish four sorts of children—the faithful, the penitent, the thoughtless and the stubborn: the two first classes constituting the good, the two last the bad scholars. If this be the case in every school, so also was it especially in that great school which I was watching. In many instances, as I said, it was difficult to discern which the children were; but in some, and particularly in these four, on whom I had fixed my eyes, the distinction was obvious.

I soon became so interested in these children that I inquired their names; and I heard that one was called Fidelia, and another Arga, and another Pentita, and the fourth Marah.

Now I will endeavour to record what I saw of their conduct. The first that I watched was Fidelia.

As soon as her work was placed in her hands, and her seat pointed out to her, and the materials put ready for her use, and the beautiful mirror set before her with the shining Image and Likeness upon it, which she was to copy exactly in her sampler, she sat down without delay, and commenced working with such earnestness as I

dently intended and yearned, not t
jot or tittle in the pattern be omitt
of it. She seemed, indeed to be
scious that there was anything el
Reflection in the school. And if
the other children, it was to see if t
fixed on the same object, or to per
turn to it immediately.

With her eyes thus wedded to h
took thankfully and abundantly of
provided for her. She kept going
and counsel to the elder child, whc
her class; and she received the inst
her most attentively, and followed
diligently.

If there was the least fault or n
work I saw that by comparing it w

to amend them pointed out, neither did she cease blushing and weeping, till she had wholly corrected them.

Sometimes her fellow scholars, and Arga and Marah especially, would whisper in her ear, telling her that the Master was out of sight, and the usher occupied with other children: and they would ask her to lay her work down, and take her eyes off her mirror, and come and play with them for a while. Sometimes they mocked and laughed at her for being so industrious: sometimes they boasted how much gayer and happier they were. But she only sighed deeply in answer, not for herself but them; and told them that to look at her mirror, and be busy in her work, made her, she was sure, gayer and happier in her heart than they could possibly be. And when they were angry, and replied scornfully or bitterly, she only smiled sweetly but sadly, and prayed them to believe her, and entreated them very humbly to try and see if her words were not true.

And not unfrequently one or two of the children would hearken to her, and turn away from their light companions, and fix their eyes on their mirrors, and begin to think the reflection there more beautiful than themselves, and then

you how sweetly and joyously s
how she bent her head down to h
and plied her fingers ten times as
fore, and I could hear her singin
melody to herself, and I could pe
absolutely growing to that marvel
of the Good Master which she was

As she kept thus gazing into t
working at her sampler, I observe
flection kept waxing more and mo
luminous, and that the outline in h
fast filling up into the very figur
represented in that mirror.

It was beautiful beyond measure
mystery of Marking.

Fidelia looked (I repeat) at he
copied it as exactly as she could.

till it dazzled me. I thought no human work could ever have been so lovely. Then, meseemed, Fidelia looked at me wonderingly and reprovingly, as if to ask me how I could think that the work was hers. Methought she pointed to the basin beside her full of that living water now like blood, now like fire. And I marvelled to behold that every stitch she made she passed her needle through that water. And I saw that it was the blood and the fire glowing in that water which made every stitch in Fidelia's work so exceedingly bright and beautiful; and when she perceived that I observed this, she smiled again, and went on joyously with her labours.

She appeared to me to grow more diligent every moment; and yet every moment I thought it impossible to be more diligent than she was already. She kept going to the monitor of her class, although she could work, I thought, better than her teacher. And yet every time she went, she seemed to bring back new knowledge and new ability.

I could perceive that of the children round about her, some laughed at her, some thought her strange, some called her a hypocrite, some named her mad, some teased her and harassed her, some even reproached and reviled her for being

labours were far lighter and pleas
play, and mirth, and merriment.

And at every taunt and contr
she bore with so sweetly, and repl
I thought her sampler seemed to
and to kindle into a nearer likenes
Pattern which she was copying.

The school hours flew past,
made rapid progress. It seemed
long ago, and yet she kept impro
the clock began to strike distinct
and Fidelia knew that the time
when she was to be called away.
murmur or repine, as the strong ir
out of the pale shadow towards
sting was taken away. Only she
the deepest and most breathless

It is impossible to describe the sweet peace, the clear joy, the meek humility, which then seemed to settle upon her countenance and hover over her work.

The iron hands came on. The clock struck its last stroke. The hands laid hold upon Fidelia. It was impossible (as I said) even for her, not to start at the icy coldness of their touch. But she had seen them coming long before, and she was ready for them. The sweet peace, and clear joy, and meek humility remained upon her countenance, as she and her work were drawn onward toward the door. Her sampler also kept flushing up brighter and brighter, as if to put to shame the dimness and paleness of the shadow, which she approached.

Her eyes went out through the rent in that shadow toward the glorious city, which, you remember, was beyond it. There the Form, which she had copied, the Form of the Good Master had gone through before her, and was waiting for her. As she entered the shadow, she smiled, and her last smile was, I felt, not of earth, but absolutely heavenly; and her lips murmured so gladly the Name of that Good Master which blazed out also in the forehead of her work, that I could not marvel to hear half the school-room

exclamation and wish to end
yet I wondered how she could
behaviour and handywork had
rent from Fidelia's. She had r
pler, and her seat had been po
close by Fidelia's. The mater
lay beside her. The fair mirror
Fidelia had set her a good e
encouraged and helped her. An
for some minutes very diligently
ning to fill up the outline of the
which she was copying. Now
she looked a little away from
gazed for a moment round the
not long enough to make any fa
work. Still I began to fear for
not seem entirely wrapped up in

could not help joining very loudly in that exclamation of the children, which accompanied Fidelia's departure.

Arga, then, for a season, looked very serious, kept her eyes fastened on her mirror, and laboured very busily at her sampler, dipping her needle continually in the basin of living water beside her. Suddenly one of the children close by, (it was Marah,) began to sing. The air was strange and wild, fearfully sweet and fascinating in its first notes and tones, but soon growing harsh, and rough, and tuneless, and ending in sounds like wailing and shrieking.

Caught by the first pleasant notes, Arga turned her eyes away from her mirror. She continued, however, to ply her needle, but forgot to dip it in the living water. Immediately she made a false stitch. There was only one wrong at first, but as she went mechanically working on, of course all the following stitches were wrong also. After a little while she looked at her work and then at her mirror, and she saw that her work was wrong. This vexed her a good deal. But she could not exactly perceive where the mistake was, and false shame kept her from consulting the monitor of her class. Perhaps also she secretly feared the trouble of unpicking her

to do so more at her ease, she
her lap for a while. The mo
working, that dreadful being
up and down and to and fro, cam
up behind her, and began watch
burning eyes, as if expecting a
tunity to do her some grievous

While she was looking about
hands without attending to wha
I thought he guided one of the
turn the basin of living water
immediately all her thread bec
entangled. So when, after her i
to work again, she found that s
so any more, not at least witho

evil being made use of as his servants and instruments. Such were Marah, whom I mentioned as beginning that strange wild song, and one or two others like her; and one or two more like Arga, or such as Arga seemed likely to become.

These drew near when they saw Arga doing nothing, and whispered to her that she should come and play with them. Arga started and hesitated, for this was directly against the rules of the school, and she knew that those who asked her were not good girls. Still, because she was neglecting her work, her mind was ill at ease, and she could not bear her own thoughts. So she rose up to play with them. Then her sampler, where that beautiful likeness was fast fading away, fell down on the ground, and became soiled and stained. She looked on it and sighed. But her companions called her. Then she saw that the thread was now a tangled heap, and the work nearly destroyed, and she thought how much trouble would be necessary to put all to rights and repair it. So she followed her companions and began playing with them. Then came the monitor of her class and began to entreat her very tenderly and affectionately to *return to her* labours. She showed Arga how *sad a condition* her work was in, and remind-

some of her careless compan
restless being who was wa
movements, began to laugh, a
of the monitor and her warn
not muster courage to resist t
put the monitor off with some
when she expostulated with h
was obliged to rebuke her, /
voked, and began to join in
mockery of her scoffing compan
passed a dreadful smile over th
tenance, (O how unlike the
smile!) the most hideous sight,
I had ever seen; for there was
the deadliest malice, and the

and shape on Arga's sampler, that the evil one laughed, as if mocking his victim, who could so madly exchange the Good Master's glorious countenance for his foul likeness.

But Arga heard not—Arga heeded not. The mist, the deceiving mist was fast gathering between her eyes and her work. She thought, "Surely my handywork is beautiful and pleasant; surely the form and face which I am embroidering in my sampler is bright and fair, and noble, and glittering." So she went on laughing and playing. By and by she ceased laughing, and her play seemed very wearisome and burdensome to her, it appeared more like toil and slavery. But the mist grew thicker and more deceitful, so she kept on playing still. Then the clock struck.

The mist passed away in an instant. Arga looked on her sampler again, and she cried out, I cannot say how piteously, when she saw whose face was upon it, and with whose name it was marked. As she cried, the monitor, whom she had laughed at, ran up quickly to her. But Arga would not hearken. She thought of her wasted time, of the beautiful likeness and Name which she had lost, of its holy and saving loveliness, of the way in which she had trodden on it, of the sampler where it was traced utterly spoiled.

ing. She felt angry with herself
monitor, and even the Good Maste
them rather than herself, for her
anything, as if it was not her o
which had occasioned all the misch
to all the usher's exhortations and
only kept muttering to herself, "
late!"

Then out of the pale motionless
the two strong iron hands; and
clock had done striking, they laid
and her work. O poor Arga! Tl
appeared extended in those hands.
her work: it ran into her. And
again even more bitterly and fear
began they to pluck her away, weepi

shadow. She shrieked out for the last time in that school, when she perceived her sad and fearful handywork, the hideous image and likeness on her sampler fixing for ever upon it, in the chill freezing breath which pierced her; and methought more than the bitterness of death was in that last wild shriek of hers. She dropped then into the gulf at that doorway, and her work passed away out of my sight into the region behind the shadow.

I NEXT watched the other two
and Pentita. Marah's history
simpler, although, if possible, n
Arga's.

As soon as she was set down
looked straight away from her n
not worked one moment withou
needle went wrong. She had sc
false stitch, before she threw h
The monitor of her class ran up
reason with her, but she would
her. She indeed took up her w
as if out of contradiction, she t
directly upon the mi

began repeating the words which he whispered softly in her ear.

The words seemed to form themselves into a song. It was that strange terrible melody which I had heard, and which caught poor Arga's imagination.

Marah seemed to find pleasure in singing this song, so as to distract the other children's attention; and when they laid down their work to listen to her, she was highly delighted; and when they looked again at their work after neglecting it for a while, and cried, and lamented, because it was so marred and spoiled, she only clapped her hands, and began to ridicule them, and laugh at them for caring about such a trifle. If she had any opportunity of slyly removing the beautiful basins of the living water, or of entangling the thread with which the children worked, she never missed it. And what seemed to give her the greatest pleasure of all, was to teach some other child that same wild song which she had caught from that restless evil being who had whispered to her.

Marah had one favourite companion; this was the fourth child, called Pentita. And, as their histories are to a certain point very similar, I need only say, that Pentita seemed very much

nor to teach the other children l
of such set malice and wicked
taught it them, because of the st
which she had found in it, and th
which it gave her; wonderful
that such a song should please a

Thus Marah and Pentita went
singing, and laughing, and distr
menting the other children ne
making a mock of all who reb
entreated, or warned them to ch
duct, before school-time should be

It was a very fearful sight, I
see such young fair creatures
beautiful and goodly piece of stu
intrusted to them; to see them
dancing, when they had become

For when I turned my eyes to the samplers, I beheld the beautiful Image and Likeness fading, disappearing, vanishing away, and the hideous face and form of the wicked one coming out more and more distinctly upon them, darkening and deepening in colour and in terribleness at every strain of their wild song, at every sound of their evil laughter, most of all at every mischief which they did to the other children.

What, I thought, will become of these two at last? For the deceiving mist was over their eyes, and hung thick between them and their work. They perceived not how hideous, how utterly foul and corrupt, how like the evil spirit, the mark on their samplers was growing. On the contrary, to them and them alone, it seemed gay and bright, and glittering. They regarded it with eyes of admiration and affection, so great was the deceitfulness of that false mist.

Now as I looked on in great fear, wondering what horrible judgment would overtake these poor wretched children, methought I heard a stir in the Good Master's tabernacle. Forthwith, as if in obedience to His call, the two strong iron hands came forth with a rushing sound out of the pale shadow of death which overhung the door of exit. They were closed, I perceived.

The icy cold touch brought them in an i
their senses. The mist rolled away fro
their eyes. In a moment all was clear.

Now they remembered the lovely outli
had once been drawn upon their samp
bright pattern which had shined so glor
the mirror set before them, the warn
invitations which they had so often desp
many precious hours which they had wa
lost.

Now they looked on their handywor
hideous face and form which they had
busy filling up upon their samplers. T
tinguished how unnatural, and foul, ar
and wretched that image was. Their
was turned into mourning, their song int
tation. They could not bear to look

Then came running up the monitor and teacher of their class, whom they had so often mocked at. Now, however, they hearkened to her words, and when she set up the mirror again before them, and laid their work afresh in their hands, and supplied them with new materials, methought they were somewhat comforted.

And when she, having heard their acknowledgments, showed them the same beautiful and blessed Countenance in that shining mirror, and bade them consider and see how tenderly and graciously it looked on such poor lost children as they had become; and when they did look and see the unutterable compassion and loving-kindness of that glorious Face, I thought that they were even glad.

But when the teacher restored the basin full of water like blood and fire to its place, and whispered that its power was never exhausted, that it could yet wash away all the dust and corruption, and every spot and speck which had gathered on their work, and wholly efface that dark hideous likeness which they had embroidered on their samplers, and restore the original outline, and disentangle and cleanse all the threads for their future work, it seemed to me that they actually began to rejoice and leap for joy.

so steadily at the beautiful mirror
to have done. She dissembled
some of her faults. She hearken
impatiently to the instructions a
which her teacher gave her. She
not feel so ashamed and distrustful
I could have wished. Her tears w
dried up, her sighs presently ceas
not turn away from her old mocking
and I thought that she soon began
her work, and dislike the trouble c
thread in the basin of water. A
that she was even hearkening to th
song, which she had once sung so l
and which now some other children
in the schoolroom, although I hear
boast that she would never join in i

joiced with trembling, for she felt how unthankfully she had once looked away from it, how she had even let fall and trampled under foot its counterpart in her sampler. And when she considered the vessel of living water, and saw it once more within her reach, and beheld how full it was even to overflowing, she could not help calling to mind how she had once overturned it, and spilled it upon the ground. So every cause of her joy was also a cause to her of alarm and regret, and the more she rejoiced the more did she mourn, and the more she mourned the more did she rejoice.

Then I cannot tell you how openly she avowed all her faults, how carefully she condemned herself without any excuse or pretence, or how thankfully she received every instruction and direction which the monitor gave her. I could scarcely follow her fingers with my eyes, so diligently and rapidly did she ply her task, as if she were redeeming the time, and felt that no industry was sufficient to show forth her love toward that good Master Who had given her, undeserving as she was, this new trial.

Then the wistful earnest way in which she kept watching His countenance in her glass, was so full of thankfulness, so very loving, that I

the old strange air beginnin
so discordantly. I looked
Marah, wearied out with l
lations, disgusted with the c
ness of her work, and un
attention to the likeness in
outline in her sampler, and
beside her, had laid her wc
some further hesitation, ran
to join her old companions.

I was shocked then to obse
looked at Pentita, instead of
changed by her good exampl
the contrary, full of jealous
drew near to Pentita, and inv
pany her. When she would
instant from her dili-

panied her when wrong, would not forsake her now that she was endeavouring to amend. And then when Marah went on mocking, she only replied with tears and silence. At last Marah grew tired of scoffing, and turned to go away.

Pentita looked at her imploringly, and sought to clasp her hand, and held on by her skirt, beseeching her to stay with her. But Marah laughed bitterly, and shook her off, and went away again to her play. The rest of her history is soon told. She broke her mirror, and overthrew her basin as before. She now absolutely flung her sampler down and trod it under foot, as if in spite at her own wilfulness, or as if she would not only destroy the outline of the beautiful Form upon it, but destroy the very substance of the sampler itself: that, however, she could not do, for it was made indestructible. So there it lay before her, with the hideous form and face of the dreadful restless being, whose song she kept singing, coming out upon it so darkly and distinctly, that it was terrible to behold.

I perceived that as her sampler grew into this resemblance, Marah likewise became restless, till she seemed nearly as restless as that very spirit of unrest himself. Her song now died away in its natural discord. Her frame grew

with the happier ind
dren, and of Pentita especia
delight seemed going up and
fro, to tempt other children t
bornness and wicked work.

Then the clock struck. Ma
ble shriek, so terrible that it
my ears. The strong iron han
the room. They were not close
and the sharp sting in them wa
They caught Marah and her
dreadful to see how she raged a
shook her hand in impotent fu
the good Master, Who had had
upon her: but it was all in v
had now laid fast hold of her.
her work with her. The child
horror, at the

sight of that mark which she has marked upon her sampler?

Pentita's course, from the warning which she and Marah received together, was indeed very different.

I had seen her, you remember, setting herself diligently and fervently to the work which she had so long neglected, the embroidery, namely, of the good Master's beautiful Image and Name upon her sampler. I had seen her full of sorrow and joy, confidence and fear, tears and thankfulness. And so she continued. I could discern, however, that her joy grew deeper, and her very sorrow more consolatory; her thankfulness and confidence fuller and happier, and her tears, though ever more abundant, brighter and clearer, as she went on weeping and working, till the outline began to fill up, and the Form and Countenance of the good Master to shine out splendidly and graciously from her sampler.

Marah kept with her, you remember, also for a little season, and then went away. How did Pentita lament, how did she cry and sigh when Marah departed in bitterness; and still more when she returned to affront and persecute her; and still more yet when she left her in anger, never to come back again!

he great iron hands, I could see Per
on her breast, and lift up her eyes swim
ears toward the good Master, Wh
nercifully changed her course, as if
aying to herself, "That is what I des
lark mark of despair, that sad terrible
ee, what I am finding instead! Who
uch goodness should have been sh
What am I better than Marah, that I
o spared, she so destroyed?"

Then she wept more than ever for
ess, and sorrow, and wonder, and joy.

And the tears of Pentita were beautif
There was scarcely anything in the scl
o beautiful. I could see in fact that t
gift from above, coming down from

loveliest glory. They shot out rays far and wide through the schoolroom. They made a kind of music and melody as they fell. And the vessel of the living water of purification overflowed its brim as they mingled with it and swelled it. And the work on which they dropped, even that beautiful Countenance and Form, over which Pentita so studiously bent, seemed, if possible, more radiant and heavenly than ever, glittering through the dew of those tears. They seemed also to cluster round about it into a rainbow—that rainbow lovely in mercy itself, which I before had witnessed encircling the good Master.

Hark! Pentita is singing to herself—not the strange wild song in which she joined with Marah, but snatches of those airs which I had heard Fidelia sing long ago. Whenever she heard herself she seemed to check herself, as if she were unworthy to be the instrument of such sweet music. But for the most part it came from her unconsciously. Moved as she was by that spirit of adoring thankfulness, she could not help singing and making melody to herself, any more than a harp can help sounding when the soft wind sweeps over its strings.

Now the Form and Countenance of the good Master was, I thought, nearly finished upon her

saw the brightness of Pentita's new

Then methought she looked up, eyes upon the clock, and perceived was running out. Then she called tor of her class, and showed her h asked for her last corrections, inst consolations. She bowed down receive her blessing, and the clock s

Forth came the strong iron ha hold of Pentita and her work. gladly, and as if wearied after her g love, did she commit herself to thei

The sweet music from on high whispering, I thought, around he carried on. And the bright city b was to be seen through its opening which filled it shot down rays, as

these four children, Fidelia, Arga, Marah, and Pentita. And I was very glad that I had been able to watch them so attentively, as the whole school, I thought, seemed a repetition of these four, so that I could almost have said that the children were either new Fidelias, or new Argas, or Marahs or Pentitas; though which were which, or how they became so, or where to draw the line amongst them, was far more than I, and methought than even an angel, could have done. But the good Master, I was sure, knew; and at the door of departure there was never any mistake made.

Now as I looked again over the schoolroom and the tumult and bustle of so many children, some working, some playing, some weeping, some laughing; when I saw so many thronging in and thronging out; so many changes in their appearance, such vast intricacy in their mixture, such great variety in their advancement and end—What, I thought with myself, is the conclusion of the whole business? What will become of the children and their work, when the good Master shall show Himself, coming forth to hold His great examination, to render to every child according to its work, and to bring to an end the great Mystery of Marking?

The schoolroom looked much
that there was even more tumult a
was customary. Most of the child
ning to and fro, and neglecting t
They made a form of attending
but in reality did nothing. The
arguing, and disputing, and quarre
and Marahs seemed multiplied.
dren who resembled them laughed
fully, and scoffed more confidently
those who would not join with
seemed fewer in number than usu
the great crowd of the other childre
them, and appeared to me to be in
and tribulation. Only I saw that t

pet, and a mighty rushing as of innumerable chariots.

And there, in the midst of the room, on a throne lifted up on great white wings, sat the great Master of the school with a book in His hand, and other books open before Him. Around Him was a company of bright-winged shapes, whom I could not even attempt to count.

There was a moment's silence, and then a voice. It was the great Master Who spoke.

At the voice again in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, all the children then in the schoolroom were changed, and all who had been taken away rose up again out of the pit, and the mist which had been in the schoolroom was dispersed, and the pale shadow also vanished away. All was clear—I cannot tell you how clear. Not one lightest cloud, or faintest vapour remained.

Then all the children with their teachers stood up, and were arranged before the throne. And every child and teacher had their work in their hands.

Then also that dreadful being who had tempted the children, stood forth amongst his followers, over against them to accuse them.

Methought every child was called upon by *name, (though* all seemed done in a moment,)

or spot, were then plainly manifest
holder in that unutterable and terril

I cannot tell you how glad those
who recognised the Likeness and
good Master on their work, or wi
they beheld its resemblance and it
the glorious Countenance and Form
sat upon the throne. They knew it w

And when the Accuser stood for
against them, the moment he beheld
Picture and Name upon the childre
he could find no fault in them or th
that would have been to find fault ir
ter and Original, which was impos
was put to silence, and retired du

to take these children and their work, and set them on His right hand. And the harps of gold sounded, and the sweet voices sang loud, as each child, on whom was the good Master's Mark, was ranged beside Him according to His direction.

I cannot, on the other hand, express any better, how ashamed and confounded those children were, who recognised the likeness and name of the tempter on their work, or how they shrieked for anguish when they perceived it was his mark.

And when he stood forth as their accuser, it was fearful to see how he pointed to his own likeness and name in their samplers, as sufficient at once to ensure their condemnation.

Then the Judge upon the throne also looked. And the children would have hid themselves from Him Whom they had pierced, and Whose image in themselves and in their companions they had trampled on: but there was nowhere to hide. He opened His book, and showed where their names had been blotted out. They were speechless, when He asked what they could say for themselves. And the wrath of His countenance was terrible beyond thought, as He forthwith gave commandment to the ministers of *His vengeance* to bind those children hand and *foot, and* set them upon His left hand. And

Then the Judge turned, and bac
upon His right hand, on whom was
enter with Him into His joy. An
sounded louder, and the voices sa
than ever, as they entered with H
winged ministers into the glorious c
New Jerusalem.

Then was there a loud outcry, r
than any sound ever heard, as thos
left, on whom was the mark of the
driven away like chaff, before the
His fury, and cast with their accu
ministers into a great lake of fire b
brimstone, which is the second de
thought, a pale cold shadow soon p